

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Trump's July 4 event praised, criticized

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump celebrated the story of America as “the greatest political journey in human history” in a Fourth of July commemoration before a soggy but cheering crowd of spectators, many of them invited, on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial. Supporters welcomed his tribute to the U.S. military, while protesters assailed him for putting himself center stage on a holiday devoted to unity.

As rain fell on him, Trump called on Americans to “stay true to our cause” during a program that adhered to patriotic themes and hailed a mix of history’s heroes, from the armed forces, space, civil rights and other endeavors of American life.

Trump largely stuck to his script, avoiding diversions into his agenda or reelection campaign. But in one exception, he vowed, “Very soon, we will plant the American flag on Mars,” actually a distant goal not likely to be achieved until late in the 2020s, if even then.

A late afternoon downpour drenched the capital’s Independence Day crowds, and Trump’s speech unfolded in occasional rain. The warplanes and presidential aircraft he had summoned conducted their flyovers as planned, capped by the Navy Blue Angels aerobatics team.

By adding his own one-hour “Salute to America” production to capital festivities that typically draw hundreds of thousands of people anyway, Trump became the first president in nearly seven decades to address a crowd at the National Mall on the Fourth of July.

Protesters objecting to what they saw as his co-opting of the holiday inflated a roly-poly

‘Salute to America’ makes a military recruiting pitch

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Flanked by armored vehicles and a coterie of senior military officers, President Donald Trump made a pitch at the Lincoln Memorial on Thursday: Join the U.S. military.

It was an unexpected turn in an Independence Day speech in his “Salute to America,” an event he envisioned and planned. Steeped in military history and appreciation, the address lauded specific achievements in each service’s past, acknowledged the presence of Medal of Honor recipients in the crowd and urged youth to serve in uniform in the future.

“They and thousands before us served with immense distinction, and they loved every minute of that service,” Trump said of the veterans decorated for valor. “To young Americans across our country, now is

your chance to join our military and make a truly great statement in life. And you should do it.”

The remark garnered some cheers from the crowd gathered before him. But it also hit on a reality for the Pentagon: Military officials are increasingly concerned about finding recruits. The challenges include increasing obesity across the nation, a growing economy that has provided other job opportunities and an overall declining desire among young Americans to serve.

Enter Trump. While the size, scope and multimillion dollar cost of his July Fourth extravaganza proved controversial, it also put the military front and center. The Pentagon spent weeks fending off questions about the president’s wish to have a full air show and tanks parked in Washington, but it also will likely benefit from the exposure.

balloon depicting Trump as an angry, diaper-clad baby.

Trump set aside a historic piece of real estate — a stretch of the Mall from the Lincoln Monument to the midpoint of the reflecting pool — for a mix of invited military members, Republican and Trump campaign donors and other bigwigs. It’s where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I have a dream” speech, Barack Obama and Trump held inaugural concerts and protesters swarmed

participation for an event hastily arranged and surrounded with confusion.

Back at the White House, Trump tweeted an aerial photo showing an audience that filled both sides of the memorial’s reflecting pool and stretched to the Washington Monument.

“A great crowd of tremendous Patriots this evening, all the way back to the Washington Monument!” he said.

Many who filed into the sprawling VIP section said they got their free tickets from members of Congress or from friends or neighbors who couldn’t use theirs. Outside that zone, a diverse mix of visitors, locals, veterans, tour groups, immigrant families and more milled about, some drawn by Trump, some by curiosity, some by the holiday’s regular activities along the Mall.

Protesters earlier made their voices heard in sweltering heat by the Washington Monument, along the traditional parade route and elsewhere, while the VIP section at the reflecting pool served as something of a buffer for Trump’s event.

In the shadow of the Washington Monument hours before Trump’s speech, the anti-war organization Codepink erected a 20-foot-tall Trump baby balloon to protest what activists saw as his intrusion in Independence Day and a focus on military might that they associate with martial regimes.

“We think that he is making this about himself and it’s really a campaign rally,” said Medea Benjamin, the organization’s co-director. “We think that he’s a big baby. ... He’s erratic, he’s prone to tantrums, he doesn’t understand the consequences of his actions. And so this is a great symbol of how we feel about our president.”

Fearing Iranian attacks, Trump rallying allies to escort ships

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is advancing a plan to escort or accompany ships through the Strait of Hormuz with international assistance, fearing an increase in attacks on oil tankers by Iranian forces.

White House and Defense Department officials told McClatchy this week that President Donald Trump wants a “coalition” convoy that will secure maritime transit through the vital strait, where a third of the world’s seaborne oil passes each day, after six tankers were attacked in May and June.

“The president is really pushing this to get it going — it’s either looking for a coalition to contribute physically or monetarily,” one White House official said. “The bottom line is America is the No. 1 producer of oil, and we want to defend

global commons and commercial oil going through the Gulf, but we don’t necessarily need it. So the president is pushing hard, and I think we’re making progress.”

At the G-20 summit last week in Japan, and at a peace conference in Bahrain, White House and State Department officials pressed allied leaders to commit to participate in the convoy operation.

Trump had been frustrated with foreign leaders who had not joined the U.S. in assigning blame to Iran for the recent tanker attacks — in particular, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was in Iran when two Japanese tankers were struck on June 13. That led Trump to lash out on Twitter, two administration officials said.

“Why are we protecting the shipping lanes for other coun-

tries (many years) for zero compensation. All of these countries should be protecting their own ships on what has always been a dangerous journey,” Trump wrote, specifically naming China and Japan.

Trump has told Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to lead the way on the initiative and is pressing him to recruit countries to demonstrably contribute to the coalition effort, the officials confirmed.

A defense official confirmed that there are discussions underway for the U.S. Navy to potentially escort vessels through the strait. But the official cautioned that there has been no change in status, and no imminent action was expected because the United States would still need a number of allies in the region to support the proposal.

US, Taliban prepare for Sunday conference

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Taliban and U.S. negotiators worked to finalize a draft agreement that will outline the withdrawal of American and NATO troops ahead of an all-Afghan peace conference Sunday.

Officials familiar with the talks but not authorized to speak about them say negotiations continued through Thursday — the sixth day of direct talks between the insurgents and U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad. They were to resume again on Friday.

Until now, the two sides had been divided on the withdrawal timetable, with the United States seeking more time.

Taliban officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, earlier said the U.S. was seeking up to 18 months to complete a troop withdrawal even as President Donald Trump told Fox News earlier this week that a withdrawal had already quietly begun and that troop strength had been cut to 9,000. The president’s statement has since been contradicted by a senior U.S. official, who said the force strength is unchanged at about 14,000. An American official familiar with the talks also disputed the 18-month withdrawal time frame, without saying what the U.S. was proposing.

Still, Trump’s statements reinforced the president’s often-stated desire to leave Afghanistan.

The Taliban have steadfastly refused to talk to President Ashraf Ghani’s government, calling it a U.S. puppet, but have said government officials can attend the conference as private citizens. In a tweet on Wednesday, Suhail Shaheen, spokesman for the Taliban’s political office in Qatar, said 60 people will attend the peace gathering, which Khalilzad called an “essential element” in achieving a peace agreement.

Officer faces trial in wake of Gallagher case

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — As throngs of reporters and military officials filed out of the Naval Base San Diego courtroom where Navy SEAL Chief Edward R. Gallagher had just been sentenced for taking photos with a deceased combatant, another SEAL — wearing pressed whites and the shining gold Trident badge of the special operations unit — waited with his attorneys to file in and take their seats. Navy Lt. Jacob X. Portier’s legal fight with the Navy is just beginning.

Portier is charged with a number of offenses related to those Gallagher fought during his 2½-week trial. Portier is charged with conduct unbecoming an officer, for allegedly conducting Gallagher’s reen-

listment ceremony near a dead enemy combatant — the same fighter whose death led to Gallagher’s court-martial.

Portier also is charged with dereliction of duty because, prosecutors say, he failed to supervise Gallagher that day. He’s also charged with failure to report war crimes allegations against Gallagher and with obstruction of justice for allegedly destroying evidence.

Portier denies the charges and pleaded not guilty.

Lt. Scott McDonald, who helped prosecute Gallagher, has taken the lead in Portier’s case. Lt. Frank Santamaria is the other prosecutor.

In a shake-up in Portier’s case this week, the judge, Navy Capt. Jonathan Stephens, made his last appearance. He is transferring to another command.

It’s unclear who will take over for Stephens, but he said from the bench that it would likely be Navy Capt. Aaron Rugh.

Rugh, who was the judge in Gallagher’s trial, was in the courtroom during Portier’s hearing. He told The San Diego Union-Tribune he could not comment on whether he would be taking over the case because he had not officially been assigned to it.

Portier’s lead civilian defense attorney, Jeremiah Sullivan, told the Union-Tribune on Tuesday after Gallagher was found not guilty of most of the charges against him, that he did not see why the service was continuing to prosecute his client.

Portier’s trial is scheduled for Sept. 3.

California rattled by 6.4 magnitude quake

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — After-shocks from Southern California's largest earthquake in 20 years rumbled beneath the Mojave Desert on Friday as authorities tallied damage in the sparsely populated region.

The strongest aftershock thus far hit shortly after 4 a.m., registering magnitude 5.4 and awakening people all the way to the coast.

Thursday's 6.4 magnitude quake struck at midmorning about 150 miles northeast of Los Angeles, near the town of Ridgecrest and the sprawling Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

Multiple injuries and two house fires were reported in the town of 28,000. Emergency crews dealt with small vegetation fires, gas leaks and reports of cracked roads, said Kern County Fire Chief David Witt.

He said 15 patients were evacuated from the Ridgecrest Regional Hospital as a precaution.

Ridgecrest Mayor Peggy Breeden said that utility workers were assessing broken gas lines and turning off gas where necessary.

Officials at the Navy base said in a statement late Thursday that no injuries were reported and so far all buildings had been found to be intact but assessments were continuing across its 1,875 square miles. Its workforce was ordered to not report on Friday.

A Ridgecrest senior center was holding a July 4th event when the big quake hit and everyone made it out shaken up but without injuries, she said.

"Oh, my goodness, there's another one (quake) right now," Breeden said on live television as an aftershock struck.

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for Kern County. The declaration means that the state will help the county and municipalities in it with emergency aid and recovery ef-

forts. Breeden noted at a news conference that other nearby governments have offered to help the recovery effort.

President Donald Trump said he was fully briefed on the earthquake and that it "all seems to be very much under control!"

California Highway Patrol Lt. John Williams said officials found cracks on several roads in the county, but overpasses and underpasses were in good shape.

"It almost gave me a heart attack," said Cora Burke, a waitress at Midway Cafe in Ridgecrest, of the big jolt. "It's just a rolling feeling inside the building, inside the cafe and all of a sudden everything started falling off the shelf, glasses, the refrigerator and everything in the small refrigerator fell over."

Video posted online of a liquor store in Ridgecrest showed the aisles filled with broken wine and liquor bottles, fallen boxes and other groceries strewn on the floor. Flames were seen shooting out of one home in the community.

Lucy Jones, a seismologist with the California Institute of Technology's seismology lab, said the earthquake was the strongest since a 7.1 quake struck another area of the Mojave Desert on Oct. 16, 1999.

"This has been an extremely quiet abnormal time," Jones said. "This type of earthquake is much more normal ... The long term average is probably once every five or 10 years somewhere in Southern California."

Jones said that the 6.4 quake was preceded by a magnitude 4.2 temblor about a half hour earlier.

There was little likelihood the quake raised the risk of a quake on the mighty San Andreas Fault, the sleeping giant that runs through much of California and is expected to be the source of the feared "Big One," the scientists said.

US employers add 224,000 jobs in June

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers sharply stepped up their hiring in June, adding a robust 224,000 jobs, an indication of the economy's durability after more than a decade of expansion.

The strength of the jobs report the Labor Department issued Friday could complicate a decision for the Federal Reserve late this month on whether to cut interest rates to help support the economy. Most investors have anticipated a rate cut in July and perhaps one or two additional Fed cuts later in the year. That scenario may be less likely now.

Indeed, the initial reaction in the financial markets suggested increased uncertainty about Fed rate cuts. Stock index futures fell and bond yields rose sharply.

June's solid job growth followed a tepid gain of 72,000 jobs in May, a result that had fueled concerns about the economy. But with June's gain, employers

have added, on average, a solid 171,000 jobs for the past three months. Last month's burst of hiring suggests that many employers have shrugged off concerns about weaker global growth, President Donald Trump's trade wars and the waning benefits from U.S. tax cuts.

The unemployment rate ticked up to 3.7% in June from 3.6% for the previous two months, reflecting an influx of people seeking jobs who were initially counted as unemployed. Average hourly wages rose 3.1% from a year ago.

The job gains in June were broad. Construction companies added 21,000 workers after having increased their payrolls by only 5,000 in May. Manufacturers hired 17,000, up from just 3,000 in May. Health care and social assistance added 50,500 jobs. Hiring by transportation and warehousing companies increased 23,900.

The government sector was a major source of hiring, adding 33,000 jobs in June.

Police: Revelers trampled in Chicago July 4 stampede

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Police said a false report of gunfire set off a stampede that trampled more than a dozen people at Chicago's annual July 4 fireworks display Thursday at Navy Pier, where thousands of revelers had crowded the Lake Michigan shore.

Three others were stabbed when a fight broke out after a group of young males flashed gang signs. Two teenage boys, ages 14 and 15, and a 30-year-old man suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

Police spokeswoman Kellie Bartoli said police were searching Friday for two male suspects in the stabbings.

Chicago Police Spokesman

Rocco Alioto said officers believe that after that altercation someone threw firecrackers at the pier and others yelled "gun" or "shots fired," spurring a "stampede" that injured 14 people. They were taken to hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries, Alioto said, adding that initial reports of gunfire were inaccurate.

Rachel Schar, who's a server at the waterfront restaurant Harry Caray's Tavern, said that during ensuing panic crowds of visitors swarmed the restaurant for at least 10 minutes to escape what they believed was an active shooter at the pier.

"It was pure chaos," the 22-year-old told the Chicago Tribune. "I literally thought I was going to die."

Trump mulling executive order for census

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Friday he is “very seriously” considering an executive order to try to force the inclusion of a citizenship question as part of the 2020 census.

Speaking to reporters as he departed the White House for a weekend in New Jersey, Trump said the idea is among four or five options he’s considering as he pushes the issue.

“It’s one of the ways that

we’re thinking about doing it, very seriously,” he said, despite the fact that the government has already begun the process of printing the census questionnaire without that question.

Trump’s administration has faced numerous roadblocks to adding the question, including last week’s Supreme Court ruling that blocked its inclusion, at least temporarily. But Trump has insisted his administration push forward and suggested Friday officials might be able

to add an addendum to the questionnaire with the question after it’s already printed.

An executive order would not, by itself, override court rulings blocking the inclusion of the citizenship question. But such an action from Trump would perhaps give administration lawyers a new basis to try to persuade federal courts that the question could be included.

“Executive orders do not override decisions of the Supreme Court,” Thomas Saenz, president and general coun-

sel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said in a statement Friday. MALDEF is representing plaintiffs in the census lawsuit in Maryland.

Opponents of the citizenship question say it would discourage immigrant participation, resulting in inaccurate figures for a count that determines the distribution of some \$675 billion in federal spending, as well as how many congressional districts each state gets.

San Francisco to paint over George Washington mural

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco will spend up to \$600,000 to paint over historical artwork at a public school depicting the life of George Washington, a mural once seen as educational and innovative but now criticized as racist and degrading for its depiction of black and Native-American people.

The “Life of Washington” was painted by Victor Arnautoff, one of the foremost muralists in the San Francisco area during the Depression. The San Francisco School Board’s deci-

sion to paint over the 83-year-old mural is prompting some to worry that other artwork from the so-called New Deal era could face a similar fate because of changing sensitivities.

In addition to depicting Washington as a soldier, surveyor and statesman, the 13-panel, 1,600-square-foot mural at George Washington High School contains images of white pioneers standing over the body of a Native-American and slaves working at Washington’s Mount Vernon estate in Virginia.

The board’s decision last week

comes at a time when the legacies of Washington and other historical figures who owned slaves are being reexamined. Some cities have changed the names of streets and buildings named after slave owners.

Richard Walker, a professor emeritus of geography at the University of California, Berkeley and director of the history project, Living New Deal, said the Washington mural is meant to show the “uncomfortable facts” about America’s first president. For that, it was among many New Deal works of art considered

radical when created.

“We on the left ought to welcome the honest portrayal,” Walker said, adding that destroying a piece of art “is the worst way we can deal with historic malfeasance, historic evils.”

Mark Sanchez, vice president of the school board and a third-grade teacher, said students who must walk past the mural during the school day don’t have a choice about seeing the harmful images. “Painting it over represents not only a symbolic fresh start but a real fresh start,” he said.

Detention facilities at border worse for migrant teen moms

Associated Press

PHOENIX — As tales of wretchedness and overcrowding in government border detention facilities abound, one group of migrants is particularly vulnerable: teen moms and pregnant girls without parents of their own.

Immigrant advocates and lawyers say the young mothers don’t get special medical consideration while they’re being crammed into U.S. facilities so packed that migrants are forced to sleep on floors or stand for days on end. As a result, the girls say they’re underfed, have poor hygiene and their babies get sick.

Their hardships aren’t over once they’re released, which can’t happen until a vetted sponsor — usually a relative — takes

them in as their immigration cases wind their way through the courts. Their lack of legal status and inability to afford child care makes it nearly impossible for them to find a job, and staying in the U.S. legally is an uphill battle even if their children are American citizens.

“The average unaccompanied minor who’s coming is facing so many challenges because of lack of access to legal representation, issues in education, lack of support, lack of mental health treatment,” said Priya Konings, the deputy director of legal services for Kids in Need of Defense, which helps unaccompanied minors.

“When you compound that with anything else such as being a young parent or being pregnant, everything becomes twice as hard.”

An attorney’s shocking discovery last month of an ailing 17-year-old girl from Guatemala cradling a clearly premature infant inside a U.S. detention center prompted a national outcry and highlighted the challenges facing the teens.

The mother had had an emergency cesarean section in Mexico in early May and crossed the border with the baby on June 4. She was in a wheelchair in extreme pain when legal advocates found her.

The girl and her baby are now doing well after leaving the processing facility in McAllen, Texas, where they were held, said her attorney, Hope Frye.

“The place where they are, it’s safe and the baby is the belle of the ball,” Frye said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Court saves dog from death for jogger attack

MI ALPENA — A Michigan appeals court has taken Bruiser off death row.

A judge had ordered that the German shepherd be euthanized after Bruiser attacked a jogger in Alpena County in 2017. While Bruiser might be considered dangerous under Michigan law, the appeals court said the man's injuries weren't serious.

The court said it was the first time the dog had attacked anyone and that there wasn't enough evidence to show that Bruiser was likely to cause death or serious injury in the future.

Bruiser had lunged at Joshua Henderson, biting his left bicep and left forearm. Henderson received three stitches.

Police: Woman mailed drugs to jail in cards

UT PROVO — Police said an American Fork woman tried to hide drugs inside cards and mail them to her jailed boyfriend.

The Daily Herald reported that authorities say a jail clerk discovered as many as 90 doses of suboxone strips in the glue strips of envelopes mailed with three letters.

Authorities say they apparently arranged the delivery by phone, with inmate Christopher Cartwright, 31, mentioning feeling sick and his girlfriend saying to watch for a letter from grandma.

Police said one letter was addressed from a grandmother, but the handwriting matched his girlfriend, Destanee Redman, 26.

Redman was arrested on drug charges. Police say she denied sending the letters and suggested another friend may have sent the drugs.

Bones found at snack stand said to be human

NJ ALPINE — Authorities said bones in a plastic bag found hanging on the door of a snack stand at a scenic overlook in New Jersey have been identified as human.

Bergen County prosecutors said a positive identification of the remains found Monday at the Stateline Lookout overlook in Alpine hasn't yet been made. The remains will be sent to a lab for identification and compared with records of missing persons.

Snack stand employees found the bones at about 8 a.m. Monday when they arrived for work. They notified the Palisades Interstate Parkway Police Department, which has jurisdiction over the area.

Parks offering military, 1st responder discounts

LA BATON ROUGE — Louisiana state parks are offering discounts through the end of the year to first responders and all former and current military members.

Members of those groups nationwide can get 15% off rentals of campsites, cabins, lodges, group camps, conference centers and pavilions at Louisiana state parks.

The agency announced the discounts Wednesday to recognize Independence Day. It said first responders' discounts are available for Monday through Thursday nights, and military discounts are available all week. Local, state and federal governmental public safety, fire, law enforcement and emergency response personnel can use the discount code BADGE for online reservations. Active-duty military, veterans, retirees, National Guard and reservists can use the code MILITARY.

As pets disappear, city OKs killing coyotes

MS COLUMBUS — A Mississippi city is giving state wildlife officers permission to kill coyotes.

The Commercial Dispatch reported that Columbus officials have received complaints about pets being injured or disappearing, and people have seen coyotes roaming some neighborhoods.

Police Chief Fred Shelton said traps aren't working because coyotes can escape and return. He said officials want to eradicate the coyotes before they hurt a human.

The concern prompted the city to unanimously approve a request by Mississippi's wildlife agency to kill coyotes within the city limits.

The chief said urban sprawl is cutting into the coyotes' natural habitat, and some residents have asked to kill coyotes themselves. He's telling residents it's OK if they see workers in state game uniforms and hear gunshots within the city.

Prostitution sting leads to meth bust

ND BISMARCK — Authorities in Mandan said a prostitution sting led to a substantial methamphetamine bust.

Burleigh County sheriff's officials told the Bismarck Tribune that the agency began a sting in late June with a deputy posing on social media as a prostitute. A Mandan man, 49, contacted the deputy and made arrangements to meet.

Authorities arrested him Monday. A search of his home netted three pounds of methamphetamine and \$80,000.

The man faces a felony drug charge and a misdemeanor charge of hiring a person to engage in sexual activity. A 39-

year-old man and a 71-year-old man were also arrested in the sting.

Health agency gives away pot storage boxes

MI COLDWATER — Buds not bullets.

Boxes that could be used to store ammunition instead are being given away to store marijuana in three Michigan counties.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is using a grant to purchase more than 500 lockboxes and provide educational materials to keep marijuana away from children. The boxes will be distributed at no charge.

Health officer Rebecca Burns told The Daily Reporter about 3,000 people in the three counties have medical marijuana cards.

Police: Man broke into center, loosed bobcat

TN CHATTANOOGA — Police in Tennessee said a man told officers he drunkenly broke into a nature center and tried to play fetch with a bobcat, accidentally allowing the creature to escape.

The Times Free Press reported that Cayden Melia, 21, must turn himself over to a county jail by July 14.

An affidavit says Melia told police that he had been drinking when he broke into Chattanooga's Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center last month. He said he used a rock to break into Evi the bobcat's cage and tried to play fetch with her, but she escaped.

A skinnier and slightly wounded Evi later returned to her cage. Melia was cited in lieu of an arrest on charges of criminal trespassing and vandalism.

From wire reports

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Underdog Holm aims for upset of Nunes

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Holly Holm didn't fight in a mixed martial arts cage until she was already a 29-year-old boxing champion of three weight classes. She had both a head start and a huge deficit in her quest to master a second sport in her athletic midlife.

Even eight years later, Holm is aware of the unique challenges of her chosen path. She knows she'll probably never face a boxer as good as her in the cage, but she also knows she might never catch up to some of her younger opponents in grappling, jiu-jitsu or the myriad intricacies of the transitions between disciplines.

So instead of setting a mundane goal to be the greatest fighter in MMA history, Holm looks at her second career as a chance to do as many unique things as possible.

"I always want to do something that

hasn't been done before," Holm said Thursday while preparing for her showdown with bantamweight champion Amanda Nunes at UFC 239 on Saturday.

"No female in the UFC has won the belt, lost it and then come back to get it again," she said. "That's something I can do this week. This is something for my legacy. I want to win no matter what, but I love to have a challenge in front of me like that."

Holm (12-4) already had one of the greatest nights in MMA history. She knows her career is likely to be defined by her world-shocking victory over Ronda Rousey in November 2015, making her a UFC champion in her 10th pro fight and transforming her into an international celebrity.

Although she lost the bantamweight title in her next bout, her place in the sport was already secure. A victory over Nunes (17-4), arguably the most talented and accom-

plished woman in MMA history, would be even more impressive than that win over Rousey, whose inadequacies were exposed again by Nunes a year later.

Nunes has held the bantamweight title for three years since she took it from Miesha Tate, who had taken it from Holm. Nunes added the 145-pound featherweight belt last December with her sensational 51-second battering of long-reigning champ Cris "Cyborg" Justino, who beat Holm by decision in December 2017.

Nunes is a solid favorite in Saturday's bout, but the numbers mean nothing to Holm or her fans. Holm is eager to test Nunes' formidable boxing skills — and possibly add to her unique list of accomplishments in this singular fighting life.

"It's the high that gets you by," Holm said. "Wanting a victory is like a drug. It keeps you going."

Ice Cube's 'Big3' hoops league continues to grow

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Ice Cube and Dakota Johnson were snapped this week in Los Angeles rehearsing for a new movie. Johnson was dressed in a white top, black leather jacket and distressed jeans. Cube? He kept it sports chic: a Raiders hat, dark shades and a Killer 3s T-shirt straight out of the Big3 catalog.

Whether sitting courtside in Philly or filming in Hollywood, Cube remains the famous face of his 3-on-3 half-court basketball league. Cube is serious about growing the Big3, heavy on nostalgia, into more than just another niche sports league. The rapper/actor and his league of former NBA players have made it to a third season, barnstorming this summer from Birmingham to Brooklyn, shooting four-pointers in pickup-style games where the first to 50 points wins.

"It's Ice Cube. Everything's going to be big," said Greg Oden, the No. 1 overall pick of the 2007 NBA Draft.

Cube is a die-hard Los Angeles Lakers fan, but hours before NBA free agency was set to formally begin, Cube was at Temple's Liacouras Center getting ready for a Big3 tripleheader,

his interest in the million-dollar deals landed by potential future stars of his league dimmed by the Sunday games ahead.

"Nah, I ain't worried about the NBA tonight," Cube said. "I've got my own league to worry about right now."

The Big3 has hit snags like any growing sports league, but it showcases its former slam dunk champs in a national TV deal with CBS, expanded this year from eight teams to 12, hits 18 markets in 11 weeks and dropped the minimum age requirement to 27.

Cube, though, wants the Big3 in Season 3 to get, well, bigger.

"We need more interest from mainstream sports media outside of when I'm doing an interview," Cube said. "Having this level of talent, I didn't think it would be as hard as it is to just get national attention on the league. It's being done top class with some of the biggest names to ever play basketball. We've got basketball gods as part of this league. I don't understand, what's not to like?"

TV ratings peaked at about 395,000 a game last year on Fox and the first week of action this year on CBS averaged 900,000 viewers.

"We're close to being in profit," Cube said. "We've still got a little work to do. But the interest is there."

Cube envisions a day when current NBA stars play in the Big3 or some retired greats (think Vince Carter) move straight from NBA retirement into a league that allows hand-checking and is home to the 14-second shot clock.

Cube, and BIG3 co-founder and owner Jeff Kwatinetz, have pushed that their brand of hoop- ing is more than an old-timer's league.

"I think there's a snobbiness to the fact that people think just because these guys are not part of the NBA, they're not the highest level of basketball that we have," Cube said. "That's just not true. The NBA only has so many spots. To be honest, the guys that we've got, the basketball IQ is 10 times better than most players that's in the NBA. They might not be able to chase John Wall 82 games down the court, but as far as knowing how to play the game, being in shape, what's not to like?"

Big3 games have rekindled the idea of an NBA comeback for a handful of players.

"Some guys want to keep their competitive juices going,"

Cube said. "Some guys feel like they didn't do what they're supposed to in the league. Or didn't have the opportunity to, so they feel like they have something to prove."

Josh Childress went from the Big3 to a training camp contract with Denver. Xavier Silas signed with the Boston Celtics after a stint in the Big3. Jason Terry retired from the NBA in 2018 and signed with the Big3.

"With the money they're giving now, that's a no-brainer," Ghost Ballers forward Jamario Moon said. "A lot of us still have something left in the tank."

Big3 players can make at least \$100,000 per season and coaches said the league provides them an NBA-type lifestyle in travel and accommodations.

Cube wants to give his players more of what they miss from their NBA days, such as Big3 highlights as a regular staple on highlight reels and published game stories that treat the players seriously and not just as a "where are they now?" curiosity.

"In a perfect world, nobody's worried about me in three, four, five years," Cube said. "They're just worried about the league and what it's doing."

'18 runner-up Anderson ousted in third round

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Last year's runner-up at Wimbledon came up against the same player who eliminated the previous runner-up at Wimbledon.

He lost, too.

Fourth-seeded Kevin Anderson, a tall South African who lost to Novak Djokovic in last year's final, was beaten by 26th-seeded Guido Pella 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (4) on Friday on Centre Court in the third round.

Pella beat 2017 Wimbledon runner-up Marin Cilic in the second round last year — after losing the opening two sets. The 29-year-old Argentine will be playing in the fourth round at a major tournament for the first time when he faces 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic.

Djokovic dropped his first set of the tournament but had few problems after that, advancing to the fourth round with a 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-4 win over Hubert Hurkacz.

Hurkacz had never even reached the third round of a Grand Slam tournament before but matched Djokovic shot for shot in a tense second set that featured some mesmerizing rallies and spectacular winners from both players.

But the unseeded Polish player couldn't keep it up, and Djokovic won the third set in only 25 minutes. He then broke for a 2-1 lead in the fourth and sealed the victory with a service winner on his first match point.

Djokovic is looking for his fifth Wimbledon title.

Fernando Verdasco also advanced, beating Thomas Fabiano 6-4, 7-6 (1), 6-4.

Anderson converted only one of his nine break points against Pella.

"He made life really difficult for me, I felt. He moves really, really well," said Anderson, who is 6-foot-8 and has one of the best serves on tour. "I felt I had a pretty hard time keeping him on defense, finishing out the points. When I was able to

do that, I had the most success.

"I could have probably served a little bit better."

Raonic, who lost to Andy Murray in the 2016 Wimbledon final, reached the fourth round by beating unseeded American Reilly Opelka 7-6 (1), 6-2, 6-1.

The 6-foot-11 Opelka was making his Wimbledon debut and knocked out three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka in the second round.

In the women's draw, two former No. 1s advanced to the fourth round and another two lost in the third round.

Third-seeded Karolina Pliskova defeated Hsieh Su-wei 6-3, 2-6, 6-4, while 14th-seeded Caroline Wozniacki lost to Zhang Shuai 6-4, 6-2. In a match between two former top-ranked players, Simona Halep beat Victoria Azarenka 6-3, 6-1 on Centre Court.

Wozniacki was leading 4-0 in the first set and also broke Zhang in the opening game of the second before losing four straight games. The Dane repeatedly grew frustrated with the result of Hawk-Eye challenges, complaining to the chair umpire on several occasions that the calls made by the review system were wrong.

"I thought there was a few ones that I saw way differently," Wozniacki said. "But it is what it is. You can't really change a Hawk-Eye call.

"Maybe it was right. I just saw it differently."

Later Friday, Coco Gauff will be the headline act on Centre Court at Wimbledon.

Not bad for a 15-year-old in her first Grand Slam tournament.

The American will play the last match of the day at the All England Club's biggest stadium when she faces Slovenia's unseeded Polona Hercog.

Gauff has quickly become a star at the grass-court major championship. She beat five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams in the first round and 2017 semifinalist Magdalena Rybarikova in the second.

Daytona prepares to host final July race

Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — There are few venues on NASCAR's schedule quite like Daytona International Speedway in July.

Sweltering summer heat and humidity with rain and lightning always lurking. Kiddie pools and American flags everywhere. A usually intense night race on a slippery surface. An over-the-top fireworks display afterward.

It's a one-of-a-kind celebration at NASCAR's most famous track.

It also could be history following Saturday night's 400-mile race at Daytona.

A significant scheduling shakeup has the iconic race tethered to Independence Day moving to late August in 2020 and becoming the Cup Series' regular-season finale. It's a bold break from tradition that's been met with mixed reviews.

"There's not a lot of other tracks that can provide what Daytona can provide on a holiday weekend," retired NASCAR driver and current NBC analyst Dale Earnhardt Jr. said. "I've never tried to celebrate that weekend anywhere else other than Daytona."

The holiday sporting event has seemingly lost some of its luster over the years, unable to fill the grandstands like the 500-miler in February. Numerous tweaks may have caused the dip.

From 1959 through 1987, the race ran on July 4 before being moved to the Saturday of the closest weekend. From 1959 through 1997, the race started no later than 11 a.m.

It moved to prime time in 1998, and few of the current drivers even remember it as anything else.

"It's kind of disappointing for me," defending race winner Erik Jones said. "Growing up, you always had the big July 4th race at Daytona, and that is where everybody was. That is what you did on Saturday night. You watched the race at Daytona.

"It's a little bit of a bummer. It's a tradition and kind of some of the things in the sport that have stuck around, and this is one of those things and I'm sad to see it go. It's a change of the times, but maybe we will make it back over here at some point."

Unpredictable weather played a factor in the move, along with NASCAR trying to boost its struggling race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway by heading there for the holiday in 2020.

And the change doesn't appear to be a one-year trial.

"This wasn't a decision we said, 'Hey, let's go there for a year and rotate it,'" said Steve O'Donnell, NASCAR's executive vice president and chief racing development officer. "Our intent is to stay for a few years and see how we net out."

Daytona executives are taking the move in stride. They're eager to see what happens with the new date. It should make for plenty of optimism for countless drivers who will need a victory to make the playoffs and could have a shot at a track known for producing late-race mayhem and unlikely contenders.

"We've written a lot of incredible chapters around the July race," said Chip Wile, president of Daytona International Speedway. "Now we have time to write a new chapter. ... You want to see one of those walk-off home run moments. This is setting the stage for that."

Earnhardt acknowledges he would have been "raising hell" over the change 10 years ago. But he's also intrigued by it.

"Things are going to change and you have to be willing to sort of let go some of that stuff," he said.

Added 2014 Cup Series champion Kevin Harvick: "That tradition is longstanding, but also times have changed and you can definitely look up in the crowd and see it was time to change."

Angels wrap up emotional series with loss to Texas

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas—Tyler Skaggs' No. 45 jersey still hung prominently over his locker in the visiting clubhouse after the Los Angeles Angels wrapped up their first series since the 27-year-old pitcher's death.

While the grieving Angels lost 9-2 in the finale against the Rangers in the Fourth of July game that Skaggs had been scheduled to start, Los Angeles took the first two games during the series after he was found unresponsive in his hotel room in Texas.

"Taking two out of three from a pretty good team that's second in the division, under the circumstances, I think is a victory," catcher Jonathan Lucroy said.

"It's been really tough, yet the guys haven't made any excuses," he said. "We've gone out there and played hard, played to win. That's what Skaggs would have wanted, and I don't think he would have liked it too much if we're in here feeling sorry for ourselves about it."

Lance Lynn worked seven innings to match the major league lead with his 11th win, and Rougned Odor homered twice to drive in five runs for the Rangers, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Mike Trout hit another impressive homer for Los Angeles in the first inning, his AL best-tying 25th. But Lynn (11-4) limited the Angels to only one more run while striking out five without a walk over his 115 pitches.

"There's no manual for how you handle something like this. I think the games do provide a space for (players) because they're trained to focus on just their job, and not be reminded of Tyler's passing," Angels manager Brad Ausmus said. "You look at it from a baseball perspective, we were able to win two out of three on the road against a team that's in front of us in the standings. But it certainly wasn't easy."

Roundup

Dodgers extend home streak to 9

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Hyun-Jin Ryu tossed six scoreless innings, All-Star Cody Bellinger hit his 30th home run, and the Dodgers beat the San Diego Padres 5-1 for their ninth straight home victory.

The Dodgers had won their previous five home games via walk-off, one short of the major league record set by the 2000 Kansas City Royals. Bellinger had the winning RBIs on Tuesday and Wednesday. They didn't need any late-game fireworks this Fourth of July.

Ryu (10-2) allowed three hits, struck out five and walked a season-high three to become the first Dodgers starter to win a game since June 21, when Walker Buehler struck out 16 in a 4-2 victory over Colorado. The South Korean left-hander lowered his major league-leading ERA to 1.73.

Bellinger homered leading off the sixth, sending a 2-2 pitch into right field to join Reggie Jackson, Mark McGwire and Willie Mays as players 23 or younger with 30 homers before the All-Star break.

The Padres dropped their fifth in a row, with JT Chargois striking out their final five batters to end the game. Dinelson Lamet (0-1) limited the Dodgers to two hits — including Max Muncy's 21st homer — through four innings of his season debut, but took the loss.

Nationals 5, Marlins 2: Anthony Rendon hit his 20th homer and knocked in the go-ahead run to help host Washington finish a three-game sweep of last-place Miami.

Washington has won eight of nine and 13 of 16 to climb to a season-best four games over .500. Kurt Suzuki homered in the second inning to extend the Montreal Expos/Nationals franchise record for consecutive games with a home run to 18.

Yankees 8, Rays 4 (10): At St. Petersburg, Fla., DJ LeMahieu hit a tiebreaking two-run single and Gary Sanchez had a long three-run homer in the 10th inning, and AL East-leading New York overcome a ninth-inning blown save by closer Aroldis Chapman to beat second-place Tampa Bay in the opener of a four-game series.

Edwin Encarnacion hit his 25th homer for the Yankees, who are 15-2 since June 15 and have a season-high, 7½-game lead over the Rays. Tampa Bay, which led the division as late as games through June 14, is 2-8 against the Yankees this season.

Braves 12, Phillies 6: Dansby Swanson hit two homers and drove in five runs, and Atlanta rallied from a first-inning, four-run deficit to beat visiting Philadelphia.

The Braves hit five homers overall, giving them a combined eight in winning the final two games of the three-game series. The Phillies dropped to third place in the division, behind Atlanta and Washington.

Reds 1, Brewers 0: Luis Castillo struck out nine while pitching one-hit ball into the eighth inning, leading host Cincinnati to past Milwaukee.

Cincinnati won for the fourth time in five games. Jesse Winker went 3 for 3 and scored the only run on Yasiel Puig's first-inning single off Brandon Woodruff (10-3).

The Brewers dropped the last three games of the four-game set. They haven't scored since the sixth inning of Tuesday's 11-inning Cincinnati win.

Cardinals 5, Mariners 4: Matt Wieters and Dexter Fowler homered, Tommy Edman came through with another key hit, and visiting St. Louis rallied past Seattle.

J.P. Crawford and Tim Beckham homered for the Mariners, who have dropped six of seven.

Indians 8, Royals 4: Francisco Lindor drove in three runs, Jose Ramirez homered twice and Cleveland rallied to beat stumbling host Kansas City to complete a three-game sweep.

Tyler Naquin and Jason Kipnis also drove in runs for the suddenly streaking Indians, who beat the Royals — losers of four straight and seven of eight — for the fifth time in six meetings.

Cubs 11, Pirates 3: Kris Bryant hit his 17th homer and visiting Chicago erupted following manager Joe Maddon's fourth-inning ejection, routing Pittsburgh to stop a four-game losing streak.

Willson Contreras drove in three runs for the Cubs, who moved back into a tie with Milwaukee for first place in the crowded NL Central, where all five teams are separated by 3½ games.

Athletics 7, Twins 2: Marcus Semien hit a grand slam in the eighth after his tying solo homer leading off the fifth, Chris Herrmann had a career-high four hits, and host Oakland beat Minnesota for a winning series against the AL Central leaders.

Semien sent the first pitch from Mike Morin over the wall in left-center for his 13th homer of the year and fourth career grand slam. He matched his career high with five RBIs, also done last year, while notching his fifth two-homer game and second this season.

Tigers 11, White Sox 5: Niko Goodrum hit a two-run homer during visiting Detroit's five-run sixth inning, and Matthew Boyd matched a career high with 13 strikeouts.

The Tigers won for just the second time in their past 13 games. Eloy Jimenez and Jose Rondon each hit a two-run homer for Chicago, which had won three straight.

Red Sox 8, Blue Jays 7: Pinch-hitter Marco Hernandez hit a tiebreaking home run in the ninth inning and Boston beat host Toronto.

Danny Jansen homered twice for the Blue Jays, the first multihomer game of his career, and Freddy Galvis added a two-run shot. Even so, Toronto failed to win consecutive home series for the first time this season.